



## **Citizens Advice Fylde**

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 - 28<sup>th</sup> Sept 2016**

In April 2016 Citizens Advice Fylde took on the rental of the whole of the Moor Street premises. Our first initiative was to work to improve the provision of telephone advice to the whole of the Fylde. We submitted funding bids to provide for the installation of a new phone system and IT that was required for us to join the Citizens Advice Adviceline project. We obtained a grant to do that from ASDA and the service began running in November 2016 with four new phone lines.

Our Adviceline telephone service is operating successfully and we will be developing it further over the next few months to incorporate Service Scheduling which is the electronic booking of appointments which will make it both easier for volunteers and quicker for clients. Adviceline is enabling people from all over the Fylde to access us more easily and to therefore gain some assistance at the first point of contact - 87% of clients now use phone as their first point of contact, with follow up appointments arranged as required.

Our Moneyplan project began on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August and will continue on the first Wednesday of each month. This project is where a financial advisor from a local agency gives confidential, impartial and free financial advice to our clients. The advisor is not allowed to sell products in any way, it is advice only.

We have one public use computer available in our new reception and we hope to increase this provision.

The increase of Outreach provision in St Annes is being explored in conjunction with Mr William Fisher from Fylde Borough Council as it is hoped we will be able to use a room in the Customer Services Area of the refurbished Town Hall for two mornings (or days) per week. Recruitment is continuing in order to ensure the outreach will be fully staffed.

At present the downstairs of the building is used by Fylde Foodbank as a food storage area, weighing area and distribution outlet. It is open to the public on a Monday and a Friday. The upstairs meeting room is rented by Kirkham Town council and is used for approximately two meetings a month.

## **Statistics for Q1 2016/17**

We have dealt with 203 full enquiries and 319 gateway enquiries. Of these enquiries, 33% have involved a benefit issue, 16% a debt issue, 11% a relationship/family issue with housing and employment both being 7%.

Of the gateway enquiries 278 out of the 319 have come through Adviceline.

Over 41% of all of our enquiries now come to us from clients living in wards in Lytham and St Annes indicating that good use is being made of the new phone system and that ALL residents are accessing our services.

## **Recruitment**

At present recruitment is a priority for us in order to fully staff Adviceline, to support those wishing to transfer from Adviceline to full Advice and to staff a further outreach in the Fylde. To support this a portion of our reserves is now being used to fund a one day a week Volunteer Development post.

As at the end of July we had 30 volunteers:

- 15 Full Advisers
- 6 Gateway/Telephone Assessors
- 2 IT/Reception assistants
- 7 Assessors in training

## **Training**

Citizens Advice has recently completed the redevelopment of its new Advice training program which has been streamlined and can be done either in paper form or online using Google Drive. The training modules themselves remain on the Training Pages of our Cablink Website. The external courses have also been modernised. Our temporary Volunteer Development coordinator has put a great deal of time into both recruitment and the implementation of the new program.

Also, we are continuing to 'roll out' the ask training to volunteers along with developing other in house courses to assist our volunteers in their work. A recent, in house, course was a refresher course on Safeguarding for both vulnerable adults and children.

## **Funding bids**

In order to maintain and develop Citizens Advice Fylde we have been putting together a number of funding bids. We must concentrate on bids where the indices of deprivation will not be a major criteria in the bidding process. Approximately 10 hours a week has been allocated to this task since the end of last year and our Operations Manager has also spent a considerable amount of time developing a 'Case for Support' which can be used to support any future bids that we submit.

So far Bids have been submitted to:

- The Alan Lane Foundation/Henry Smith and Tudor Trust - For the specialist training and provision of a Domestic Violence caseworker for Fylde.

- The Alan Lane Foundation has awarded us £7,700 which is being held by us whilst we wait to see if the other bids to provide matched funding are successful in order

for the full project to run. If they are not then we will redesign the project and contact The Alan Lane Foundation to ask if the money could be used to fund a more limited project.

The Big Lottery reaching Communities Fund - For a debt, benefit and housing caseworker along with training provision.

Comic Relief Core Strength - For a volunteer coordinator post

Martin Lewis Fund - For the development of a Digital Appointment APP

United Utilities - For the provision of a Home visiting service.

Along with these bids submitted by Citizens Advice Fylde we have also been exploring pan Lancashire bids as a member of the Advice Lancashire consortium. Advice Lancashire is a partner in a bid to ESF led by SELNET. The bid is for two streams of the Building Better Opportunities funding: Age of opportunity and Invest in youth. We have recently heard that this bid has been successful and as a partner Citizens Advice Fylde should receive approximately £12,000 spread over three years. The details are yet to be confirmed and there is some concern as this is European funding and BREXIT may play a part.

## Our Future

We have been asked by Fylde Borough Council to consider our future requirements and how we can continue to work closely with them. We have put together the following information:

### **Citizens Advice Fylde Outline Budget Projection to meet Business Plan Objectives for Core Service to 2020**

#### Assumptions

- 1- Fylde Borough Council (FBC) will grant a 3 year Service Level Agreement (SLA) to meet these costs to 31/3/2020.
- 2- FBC will extend our current lease on existing parameters for 3 years to 31/3/2020 with a 5% rent increase to £11,750 pa.
- 3- Citizens Advice Fylde will use Reserves to fund additional management capacity to assist in recruitment and training of an enlarged volunteer team in 16/17 and 17/18. Thereafter, the management team will return to a sustainable minimum. After 18/19 Reserves will have been reduced to the lowest necessary for 'winding up' obligations.
- 4- General Inflation figures for salaries and 'bought- in' services are:  
17/18 +3%  
18/19 +2%  
19/20 +2%
- 5- Accommodation costs for the expansion of outreach will be 'gratis'.

6- Budget projection and indication of Grant Request:

SLA Core Service	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
Outline Budget Expenditure	103,777	106,890	95,258 *	97,163
Sub-letting	2,000	2100	2,100	2,100
Donations	500	515	525	535
Net Budget	101,277	104, 275	92,633	94,528
Allocation from Reserves	14,495	14,890	1,460	1,532
FBC Grant Request	£86,782	£89,385	£91,173	£92,996

\*Staffing reduced by 0.4 FTE

**Citizens Advice Fylde - Extra possible services to assist Fylde Borough Council and Fylde Residents could include:**

The provision of public use computers in Kirkham for job searching, benefit form completion, Housing applications, viewing plans etc – this may be a priority should Kirkham Library close. We are investigation possible funding sources to facilitate this.

Use of the conference room and/or downstairs meeting area at Moor street to display plans etc or for ad hoc meetings.

Holding Council information and/or tourist information in Kirkham.

**Conclusion**

Citizens Advice Fylde aims to continue to develop and grow in order to meet the needs of all of Fylde's residents. We will strive to source new funding and partnership working in order to meet that aim.

Our website is [www.fyldecab.org.uk](http://www.fyldecab.org.uk) and we are also on facebook and twitter. If anyone would like to contact me for a chat about what we do and volunteering opportunities they would be very welcome to do so. I can be contacted on 01772 673014.

Kim Cook

Chief Executive Officer 2016

Supported by:

